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Examiner: Saurel J. Selkin
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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A lancing apparatus comprising a lancet holder for retaining a lancet, the lancet including a main body and a needle projecting from the body, the lancet holder being moved in a lancing direction from a standby position to a lancing position together with the lancet so as to cause the lancet to stick into an object, the lancet being inserted into the lancet holder in a retreating direction opposite to the lancing direction, thus to be retained by the lancet holder,

wherein the lancet holder includes a first member and a second member that are movable relative to each other, the second member being movable relative to the first member between a fixing position in which the main body of the lancet is fixed to the lancet holder with a first fixing force and a non-fixing position in which the main body of the lancet is held by the lancet holder with a second fixing force smaller than the first fixing force for facilitated removal allowed to be removed from the lancet holder.

2. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least either of the first and the second members applies a pressing force to the lancet for fixing the lancet.

3. (Previously presented) The lancing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein, when loading the lancet, the lancet moves relative to the first member, while the second member moves together with the lancet relative to the first member in the retreating direction from the non-fixing position toward the fixing position, and

wherein the lancet holder applies a greater pressing force to the lancet when the second member is located at the fixing position than when the second member is at the non-fixing position.

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4. (Previously presented) The lancing apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising fixing means that applies a pressing force to the lancet for fixing the lancet when the second member is at the fixing position.

5. (Previously presented) The lancing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the first and the second members respectively include a first engaging portion and a second engaging portion that are engaged with each other when the second member is at the fixing position, the fixing means comprising the first and second engaging portions.

6. (Previously presented) The lancing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein at least one of the first and the second engaging portions projects toward the other of the first and the second engaging portions.

7. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein one of the first and the second engaging portions comprises a recess, and the other of the first and the second engaging portions comprises a projection to be fitted into the recess.

8. (Previously presented) The lancing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the first member includes a pressing portion that applies a pressing force to the lancet, and wherein the second member includes a working portion that displaces at least a part of the pressing portion from the lancet when the second member is located at the non-fixing position or between the non-fixing position and the fixing position.

9. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the pressing portion includes a pair of movable portions,

wherein a gap is provided between the pair of movable portions for allowing the working portion to move, and

wherein the gap is expanded when the working portion moves through the gap, so that at least a part of the movable portions is displaced so as to separate from the lancet.

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10. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein at least one of the movable portions includes at least one cutaway that defines a part of the gap, and that the working portion fits into.
11. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said at least one cutaway comprises a first cutaway portion into which the working portion is fitted in fixing the lancet, and a second cutaway portion into which the working portion is fitted in discharging the lancet.
12. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said at least one cutaway comprises a cutaway portion arranged to make the gap continuously or incrementally narrower when the working portion relatively moves with respect to the first member in the lancing direction.
13. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the cutaway portion includes a tapered portion that makes the gap wider continuously as proceeding in the lancing direction.
14. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the cutaway portion includes at least one stepped portion that makes the gap wider sequentially as proceeding in the lancing direction.
15. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the cutaway portion includes a tapered portion that makes the gap wider continuously as proceeding in the lancing direction, and also includes at least one stepped portion that makes the gap wider sequentially as proceeding in the lancing direction.
16. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the pressing portion includes a fixed portion and a movable portion,

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wherein a gap is provided between the fixed portion and the movable portion for allowing the working portion to move, and

wherein the gap is expanded when the working portion moves through the gap, so that at least a part of the movable portions is displaced so as to separate from the lancet.

17. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second member includes a pair of movable portions for holding the lancet therebetween, and

wherein the movable portions are displaced away from the lancet when the second member is relatively moved with respect to the first member in the lancing direction, but displaced toward the lancet when the second member is relatively moved with respect to the first member in the retreating direction.

18. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the lancet comprises a recess, and

wherein the movable portion comprises an engaging portion to be engaged with the recess.

19. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a pushing member that moves the second member in the lancing direction.

20. (Original) The lancing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the pushing member includes a working portion that interferes with the second member and an operating portion to be manipulated so as to move the working portion.

21. (New) A lancing apparatus comprising a lancet holder for retaining a lancet, the lancet including a main body and a needle projecting from the body, the lancet holder being moved in a lancing direction from a standby position to a lancing position together with the lancet so as to cause the lancet to stick into an object, the lancet being inserted into the lancet holder in a retreating direction opposite to the lancing direction, thus to be retained by the lancet holder,

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wherein the lancet holder includes a first member and a second member that are movable relative to each other in a needle extending direction, the second member being movable relative to the first member between a fixing position in which the main body of the lancet is fixed to the lancet holder and a non-fixing position in which the main body of the lancet is allowed to be removed from the lancet holder, the second member including a movable fixing portion that moves in a direction crossing the needle extending direction for fixing contact with the main body of the lancet in response to the movement of the second member from the non-fixing position to the fixing position.